

I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, Americans are outraged with the present course in Iraq. Here we are more than three years later with over 3,100 of our brave men and women killed fighting a war that has cost our nation over \$370 billion dollars.

It has become overwhelmingly clear that the current strategy to secure the peace in Iraq is failing. And yet, the Administration contends that sending more combat troops into Iraq is the silver bullet solution to quell the ongoing violence. I couldn't disagree more.

The resolution before us today establishes two overwhelmingly clear and concise principles that are supported by a large majority of Americans, and I am confident will garner the support of many of my colleagues from the other side of the aisle. First and foremost, we support our brave servicemen and women. They have done everything asked of them bravely and honorably, and for that we in Congress and all over America are forever grateful. Second, we oppose sending additional troops into Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, during this debate, some of my colleagues have used the word "victory" in their remarks. But, no one – not my colleagues in this chamber nor anyone in this Administration – has yet to clearly define what "victory" in Iraq means. At one point we were told "victory" was getting rid of weapons of mass destruction. Then of course we learned there were no weapons of mass destruction.

When that didn't work we were told victory meant toppling a dictator, and we would be greeted as heroes. We toppled the dictator, but of course were never greeted as heroes and yet still no victory. The Administration then told us establishing elections would constitute victory. The Iraqis have had ___ elections yet still not victory...all the while the casualty toll continues to rise.

Earlier this week, I had an opportunity for the first time to visit with wounded soldiers recovering at the Walter Reed Army Medical Hospital. Seeing first hand the devastating injuries that some of our brave soldiers have endured has troubled me in a way that I have never known before. As an American who loves his country and as a father of two teenage children it became crystal

clear to me -- right then and there -- what “victory” in Iraq means. Victory means bringing all of our brave troops home alive and uninjured as soon as possible. The way I would want my two children brought home if they were in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle had the better part of three years to use their position in the Majority to change the course in Iraq, and they did nothing. No resolutions, few if any hearings and no accountability. How many more American lives are worth risking to continue an ill-conceived and poorly-planned strategy that clearly is not working?

The American people answered that question last November – they’ve had enough. Enough political rhetoric; enough “stay the course”; and most importantly – enough loss of life.

Some of my colleagues are trying to mischaracterize this resolution; they say this resolution somehow demonstrates a failure to support our troops. That is ridiculous.

Let me be clear - everyone in this chamber, Republicans and Democrats alike, support our brave men and women serving in our armed forces. Simply because we believe the best way to support our troops is to bring them home does not mean we don’t stand behind them. In fact, I think it means a greater commitment to support them.

Mr. Speaker, I was not elected to blindly follow along. I was not elected to accept the status quo. I was not elected to be a rubber stamp.

I was elected to stand up when necessary and say no, I disagree. And that is exactly what I, and many of my colleagues, are doing here today.

The American people have run out of hope and they are tired of the failed policies of this Administration. It’s time for a new approach; it’s time for a new strategy; and most of all, it’s time for a new direction.

Thank you. I yield back the balance of my time.

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